

on talent, skills, and creativity of their workforces for their success. Companies, communities, and students all benefit from a vital and a successful educational system.

Many high-tech firms in my district in central New Jersey already invest in the local schools. They have much to offer, especially in technical areas of science and math. The New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce has a program called Tech Corps New Jersey which recruits business volunteers with expertise in computer technology to work with schools that need assistance in the area of education technology. I believe we need to encourage these partnerships where businesses can invest in their local communities.

Businesses can easily help schools keep up to date with their technology infrastructure. The E-rate, which supports discounted internet wiring and services to schools and libraries, is a good example of effective Federal local partnership which can help finance technology infrastructure in our schools.

Certainly local taxpayers bear the responsibility for educating their children, and local taxpayers shoulder most of the cost, but the education of our youth is a national responsibility, similar to national defense, and it is time the Federal Government steps up and accepts our responsibility to local districts for the education of our children.

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSWOMAN CARRIE MEEK OF FLORIDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK).

Mr. Speaker, I want to submit for the RECORD an article that ran in the Sunday September 26 edition of the Miami Herald. This article talks about the achievement the gentlewoman from Florida has made and the obstacles she had to overcome to get to Congress. She was the first African American female to serve in the Florida Senate. And when we both were elected to Congress in 1992, this marked the first time in 127 years that an African American from Florida had been sent to Congress.

This year marks 20 years of service for Congresswoman MEEK. Her constituents are proud of her hard work and the results she brings to her district. She has fought for fairness in the appropriations process, and I am proud to recognize the gentlewoman for her accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON).

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am so delighted to hear that the gentlewoman is paying tribute to our colleague, and I hope that the gentlewoman will allow me to mention that she has taken a leadership role in heading the task force on census for the Congressional Black Caucus and that she has been very diligent in her legislative duties here.

I really compliment the gentlewoman for making a record of this because the gentleman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) is a very worthy person.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON).

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I also want to add my congratulations to our colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK), and I commend the gentlewoman for bringing this to the floor and putting on RECORD her achievements.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN).

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me, and I really would ask all of my colleagues who have not seen this article to read this in the RECORD. It is a wonderful tribute to a woman who has served in her State legislature and is very much admired.

People just came to her to get information and to get help. She was my chairman on the education subcommittee in appropriations when we served together, and she was fairer than anybody I have ever seen because she understood the entire State of Florida, what it meant for rural areas to have funding as well as the urban areas.

We just all love her in Florida, and we all respect her and admire her for the work that she has done. So I would really hope our colleagues do read this article because it is fabulous.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN).

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) for yielding to me, and I too would add my voice to the accolades that are being paid our good friend, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK).

I first met her some, and she may not want me to tell how long ago, 25 or 30 years ago, and I got to know her. I followed her career over the years, and my friends in the State of Florida all have said to me what a great person that she was there in the Florida legislature.

When I came here in the class of 1993, it was a great pleasure for me to be here and to have the opportunity to serve with her. It has been a service that I have enjoyed tremendously, and I can truly say that I do not believe

that I would be standing here as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus had it not been for the great support and guidance that I received from her since being here in this body.

The people of Florida should be very proud of her. I am pleased to see it here that her hometown newspaper has paid her such a tremendous tribute. It is one that is well deserved.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. In closing, Mr. Speaker, my favorite saying is, "Let the work I have done speak for me." And certainly Mrs. MEEK's work speaks for itself. In fact, I recommend that she look at serving 20 more years. 20 more years of service from the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) would be a great tribute to Florida and to this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the article I referenced above follows:

[From the Miami Herald, Sept. 26, 1999]

REPRESENTATIVE MEEK MAKES 20-YEAR MARK—MIAMI CONGRESSWOMAN DISPLAYS DEFT POLITICAL TOUCH

(By Andrea Robinson)

WASHINGTON.—Though a morning of angry wind and rain has transformed the nation's capital into a virtual ghost town, an intrepid band of Washington luminaries heads toward a meeting room in a basement of the Capitol.

Among the celebrity attendees: House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, Sen. Bob Graham, Attorney General Janet Reno and U.S. Reps. Charles Rangel and James Clyburn, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The draw? U.S. Rep. Carrie Meek, D-Miami, who has summoned an obedient cadre of political figures to speak to a group of her visiting constituents. "We're here because Carrie told us to be here," Labor Secretary Alexis Herman says.

This year, Meek marks 20 years of public service, 13 of them in the Florida Legislature. She is the first black Floridian to win a seat in Congress in recent history, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, a four-time congressional winner whose only general-election opponent earned just 11 percent of the vote.

Over the past 12 months, Meek is credited with boosting her district by helping to secure notable federal allocations—\$130 million in employment-zone tax incentives; \$35 million in housing grants to rebuild public housing; \$2.2 million to jump-start a Little Haiti program for troubled children.

But most remarkable, political observers say, has been Meek's ability to play politics in more than one arena. Meek—an unapologetically liberal Democrat—has managed to solidify her standing not only with members of her own party but with those across the aisle.

"She's got a nice way, but she's no push-over," says Rep. E. Clay Shaw, R-Fort Lauderdale. "She has a velvet glove, but sometimes she can have a fist in it. She's so likable that it's sometimes disarming."

BOLDLY STEPPING FORWARD

Once a neighborhood activist, she has become a power broker.

Carrie Meek has never been timid. When she started in politics, she was audacious.

In the Legislature, Meek regularly intensified floor debates, once threatening to camp out on the doorstep of a colleague who was reluctant to increase funding for Jackson Memorial Hospital.

Back then, if she thought a particular bill needed to be killed, she waved a black flag adorned with a skull and crossbones, declaring the measure needed to be "black flag dead."

"It's now in the nomenclature of the Legislature. They wanted my son to use it," Meek says, referring to state Sen. Kendrick Meek, D-Miami.

Carrie Meek has established a fairly liberal voting record, generally following Democratic endorsements of affirmative action, abortion rights, gun control, and spending on housing and job creation. She has favored increasing the minimum wage, expanding the rights of immigrants, and giving tax credits to small businesses in her district.

Her current causes: Census 2000, which aims to count minorities fully in the upcoming census, and additional research on lupus, the autoimmune disease that claimed her sister.

Meek has sided with Republicans on some matters, such as opposing military defense cuts or foreign-policy adjustments to ease relations with Cuba.

On voting evaluations this year, Meek scored 95 or better with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the nation's largest public service employees union, and with Americans for Democratic Action, a group that promotes human rights.

She fared worse with business groups, scoring 28 with the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, and only four with the American Conservative Union, which focuses on foreign-policy, social and budget issues.

At a party Sept. 17, 300 supporters gathered on a Washington rooftop to celebrate Meek's 20-year tenure in politics. The guest list included Miami-Dade Commissioners Betty Ferguson and Dennis Moss, Opa-locka Mayor Alvin Miller and representatives of Washington's black elite.

The woman they toasted had graduated from neighborhood activist to power broker. She is one of 60 members of the House Appropriations Committee, where virtually every spending billion housing, transportation, taxes or juvenile crime—is scrutinized.

Remarkably, Meek won a spot on Appropriations during her freshman year. In that term, she sponsored, and won, a measure providing Social Security retirement for nannies and day laborers. After Hurricane Andrew, she helped to obtain more than \$100 million in federal aid for South Florida, and joined the fight to rebuild what had been Homestead Air Force Base.

The past 12 months have brought success and failure.

Meek pushed unsuccessfully for a bill that would employ welfare recipients as census takers. Also stalled is her attempt to increase funding for lupus research.

On the other hand, Meek helped to bring Miami-Dade about \$80 million in economic development money this year. And, with the aid of Florida Republican lawmakers such as Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Sen. Connie Mack, she helped to establish new protections for almost 50,000 Haitian immigrants.

Perhaps the biggest prize was the empowerment-zone designation, which will mean \$130 million in tax incentives over 10 years, and millions more in job grants.

Norman Ornstein, a policy analyst for the conservative American Enterprise Institute, says Meek has carved out a political niche.

"She's open, frank . . . a nice person who works hard," Ornstein says. "When people say nice things about her, it's not just blowing smoke. She ranges across a series of

areas: Cuba, Haitians, housing. What she does is outside the norm."

Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., says Meek has kept her eye on an important goal: looking out for the people in her district.

"We see showboats and we see tugboats," Lewis says. "She's a tugboat. I never want to be on the side of issues against her."

Carrie Pittman Davis Meek was born in Tallahassee. She is a granddaughter of slaves, the youngest of 12 children and a firsthand witness to the injustices of bigotry.

Though she grew up in the shadow of the Florida Capitol, segregation prevented her from setting foot in state offices. Her father, Willie, one of the great influences in her life, took her onto the Capitol grounds on the only day it was permitted—inauguration day.

"I grew up in a discriminatory society," she says. "I knew what it was like to be treated differently. I wanted to see things changed, and wanted to assist any movement to help with changing it."

Though she graduated with honors in biology and physical education from Florida A&M, her race kept her from medical training at state colleges. She enrolled at the University of Michigan and received a master's degree in public health.

After college, Meek returned to Florida and pursued a career in education, working for 30 years as an instructor at Florida A&M and Bethune-Cookman College, and as an administrator at Miami-Dade Community College.

Her interest in public service was kindled in the late 1960s, when she became the local director of the federally funded Model Cities program. She designed recreation programs for low-income public housing tenants.

"I learned people needed homes, schools, day-care centers," Meek says. "I learned of all these unmet needs in the community."

In 1979, some tenants in those same Miami neighborhoods urged Meek to run for a vacant seat in the Legislature. Meek initially ran into resistance from some of Miami's black political leaders, who favored James Burke, a Democrat who had name recognition because of a previous unsuccessful House race. Now, Burke is on trial in federal court, accused of bribery.

Meek defeated Burke in the primary, trounced Republican Roberto Casas in the general election, and assumed office with a central goal: to champion "little people" causes such as housing, education and equal access.

Over the past 20 years, Meek has achieved milestones: the first black female to serve in the state Senate, the first leader of the state's black caucus, and the first black from Florida in modern history elected to Congress.

Her District 17 stretches through the central part of Miami-Dade, from Carol City to Homestead.

When not in Washington, Meek returns to the house in Liberty City—a few blocks from the Martin Luther King Metrorail station—where she has lived for 35 years.

Divorced twice and living alone, she likes dancing, quiet evenings at home, reading books or playing with Duchess, a great Dane puppy.

HOPES IN LIBERTY CITY

Federal aid for housing shows "possibilities of what can happen." It is just after 10:30 a.m. on a recent weekday, and Carrie Meek is riding along Miami's Northwest 27th Avenue. Since a ceremony last month, the street carries her name: Carrie P. Meek Boulevard.

She is headed to the Miami-Dade Housing Agency to join U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo for an announcement: a \$35 million federal housing award for renovation of the Scott and Carver housing developments in Liberty City.

On three previous attempts, the county missed a shot at the funding. Last year, Meek's staff asked HUD to help the county craft a better application.

Problems are chronic at the housing developments. But with the new money, housing officials intend to start over. Demolition is set for 754 units at Scott Homes and 96 at Carver Homes. In their place, the county will build 382 single-family and townhome units, adding more grass and trees.

The housing agency has great hopes for the project—lower density, reduced poverty, less crime. Meek says the assistance is long overdue.

"It's about the possibilities of what can happen in Liberty City," she says.

COOPERATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about cooperatives, but I cannot resist talking about my friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK).

I did not know the gentlewoman before I came to Congress. I did not have that privilege. But we have become soul mates here, and I certainly want to express my admiration for her constituents, who understand her value and the true quality of the person representing them. I want to commend the newspaper, who also understands quality of service. So I just wanted to add those additional remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about cooperatives and to say this is National Cooperative Week, celebrating the founding of cooperatives and why they are special and why we make this recognition.

Cooperative businesses are special because they are owned by the consumers they serve and because they are guided by a set of principles that reflect the interests of those consumers. More than 100 million people are members of some 47,000 U.S. cooperatives, enabling consumers to secure a wide array of goods and services, such as health care, insurance, housing, food, heating, electricity, credit unions, child care, as well as farming.

Farming community cooperatives indeed have been very important. In the agricultural sector, USDA's Cooperative Services' survey of farmer cooperatives for the year 1995 reported that actually there were more than 4,006 cooperatives in operation. These associations provide a variety of services, from buying, as well as producing, as well as marketing. So they have made a difference.

Cooperatives structured properly can be of great benefit to farmers. They focus on their ability to collectively